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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /078 W
----------102292 161818Z /72
P R 161511Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3622
INFO AMCONSUL FORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC--A GUIDE

1. THE ITALIAN CONSTITUTION CLEARLY SETS FORTH THE PROCEDURE WHEREBY A EW PRESIDENT IS ELECTED FOLLOWING THE DEATH, PERMANENT DISABILITY, OR RESIGNATION OF A PRESIDENT. (LEONE IS NOT THE FIRST PRESIDENT TO LEAVE OFFICE DURING HIS TERM, PRESIDENT SEGNI HAVING RESIGNED IN 1964 AS A RESULT OF HIS PERMANENT DISABILITY AFTER ONLY TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS IN OFFICE.) UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES (INGRAO--COMMUNIST) MUST CONVOLKE THE ELECTORS WHO WILL SELECT THE NEW PRESIDENT WITHIN FIFTEEN DAYS FOLLOWING LEONE'S RESIGANTION.

2. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POTENTIAL ELECTORS IS 1011 BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

A. 630 MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES;

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B. 323 MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, INCLUDING 315 ELECTED MEMBERS AND SEVEN APPOINTED FOR LIFE, AMONG THEM LEONE AS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC;

C. 58 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REGIONS WITH THREE ELECTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF EACH REGION EXCEPT THE VAL D'AOSTA WHICH HAS ONLY ONE REPRESENTATIVE.

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WE ASSUME THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF ELECTORS WILL BE MARGINALLY LESS THAN 1011 SINCE ONE PARLIAMENTARIAN (SACCUCCI-MSI) IS HIDING ABROAD TO AVOID CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AND OTHERS MIGHT BE ABSENT FOR ILLNESS OR OTHER REASONS.

3. VOTING FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT IS DONE BY SECRET BALLOT. ON THE FIRST THREE BALLOTS, A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OFTHE ELIGIBLE ELECTORS IS REQUIRED. AFTER THE THIRD BALLOT AN OBASOLUTE MAJORITY (506) IS SUFFICIENT. VOTING WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES WHICH HAS THE LARGER HALL OF THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLI-AMENT.

4. THE TERM OF THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL BEGIN AFTER HE TAKES HIS OATH OF OFFICE, WHICH NORMALLY OCCURS WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF THE COMPLETION OF THE BALLOTING. ALTHOUGH NOT REQUIRED BY THE CONSTI-TUTION, IT HAS BECOME PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO OFFER ITS RESIGNATION TO THE NEWLY INSTALLED PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT HAS TRADITIONALLY NOT ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION, ALTHOUGH, AGAIN, THERE EXISTS NO LIMITATION ON HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION IN RESPONDING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE.HOLMES

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